

and prepossessions engendered by the study of particular Sciences. In the first place the unphilosophical student of a particular Science may often get beyond the province of his own Science without knowing it; and, when he does so, he is peculiarly liable to apply to the subject a method which has proved fruitful in another Science but which is quite unsuited to that which he has invaded. I am not now alluding so much to the necessary and inevitable abstractness of each and every special Science, the correction of which belongs rather to Metaphysic or Philosophy in general than to Logic, but to the specialist's tendency to encroach upon another specialism without being aware of the fact. When he does so, the Logician may usefully point out some of the considerations which make the estimation of evidence in one department a different intellectual task from its estimation in another. Thus to take up my former illustration, it may be doubted whether the study of Logic would do much—over and above the mental training which every Science can supply—to improve the capacity of a criminal lawyer or Judge for estimating evidence in a Court of Justice; he will not reason better for having analysed the principles which his reasoning involves. But, when on the strength of experience in criminal courts a lawyer claims to be a peculiarly good judge of the evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, an analysis of the principles which the estimation of testimony involves may lead him to see that the mental and religious environment of the early Christians was different from that in which his own inductive canons of evidence were unconsciously made. The other way in which the study of Logic may sometimes have a practical bearing upon the actual results of a Science is when we come to the questions of degrees of probability. Degrees of probability for the purpose of his own Science it is emphatically the business of the specialist to examine; it is a matter of trained instinct rather than of analysed reasoning to see in which of two rival hypotheses lies the true line of scientific progress; but when

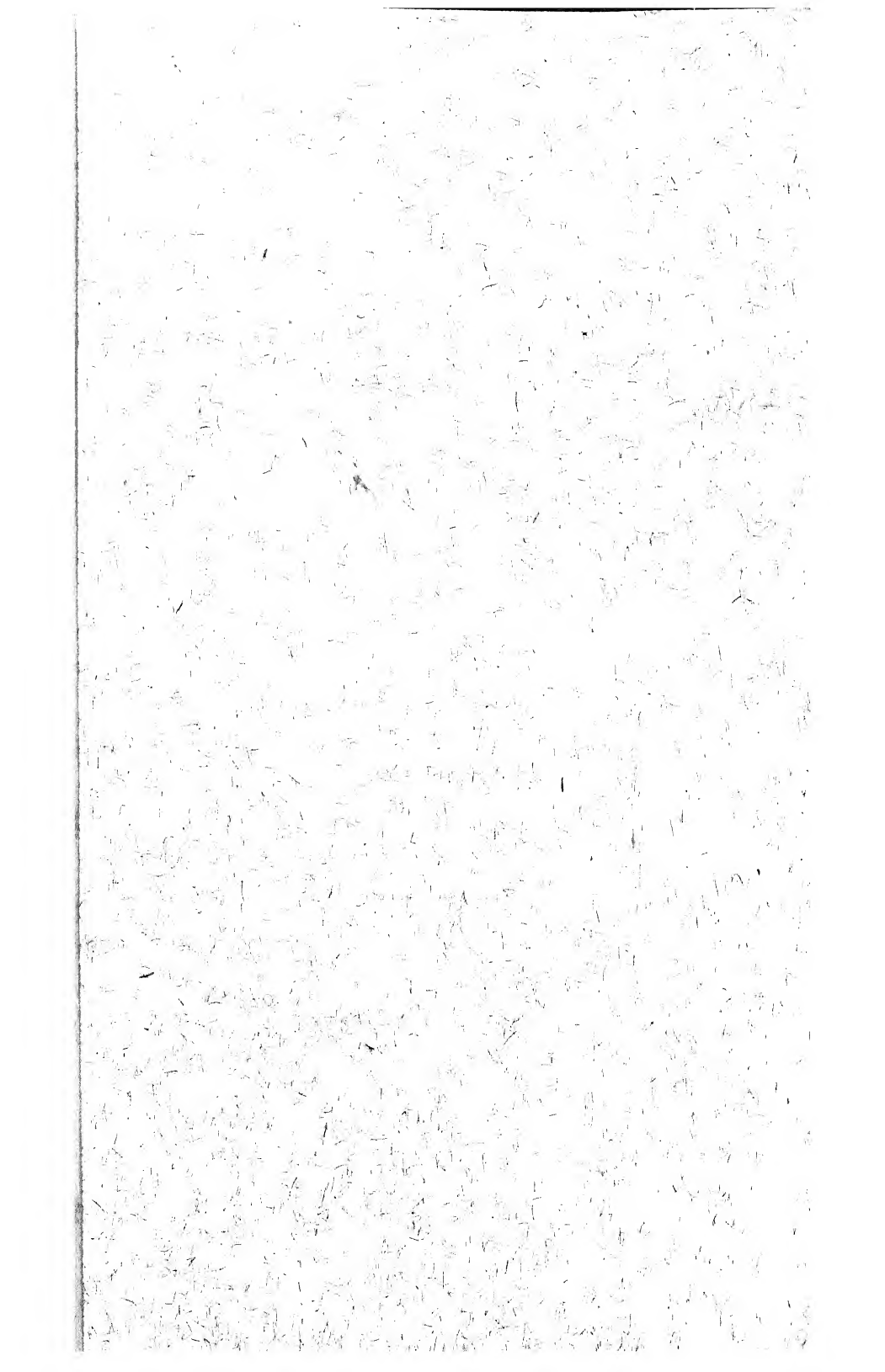
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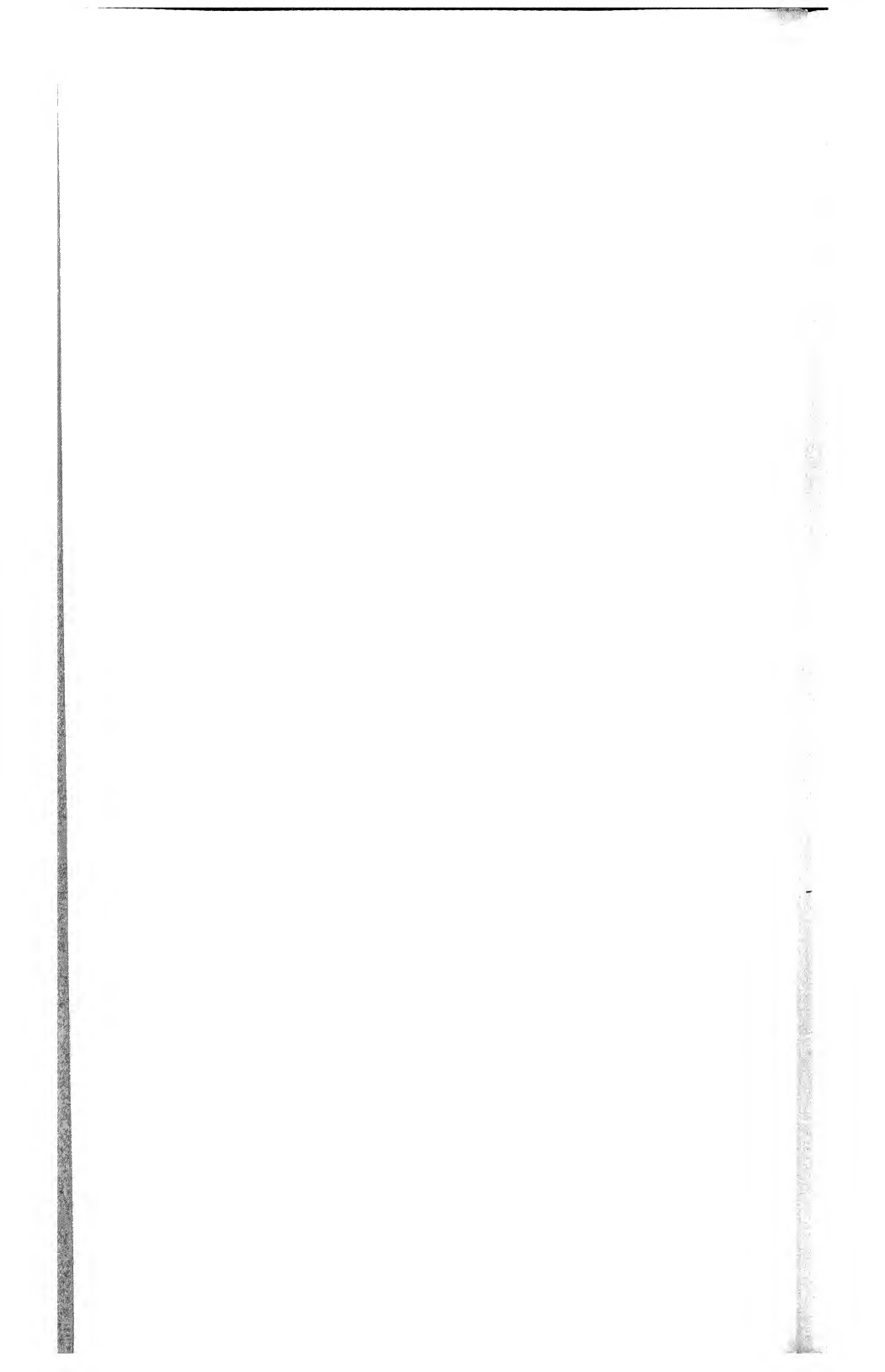
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PAPERS READ BEFORE THE SOCIETY, 1905-1906.

I.—CAUSALITY AND THE PRINCIPLES OF HISTORICAL EVIDENCE.

By DR. H. RASHDALL.

I.*

As a general rule it may be laid down that the exponents of a Science are the best judges of its methods. It is not the business of the Logician to lay down rules for the guidance of scientific men. In so far as Logic is concerned with the actual methods of particular Sciences, the Logician must rather analyse the methods actually employed in those Sciences up to the present than attempt to prescribe *a priori* the methods that they must follow. While the ultimate principles of thought must be the same for all Sciences and for all departments of human life, there are in a sense special canons of evidence appropriate to particular Sciences. The mind that is steeped in the subject-matter of a Science gets to know the kind of evidence that the Science requires and admits of (however little it may be accustomed to analyse its own procedure), and to estimate that evidence correctly. Each branch of learning has its own methods, and the method can only be acquired by familiarity with the Science itself. A

* I must acknowledge my obligations throughout this paper to Mr. Bradley's *Presuppositions of Critical History*, 1874, though I do not adopt all his positions.

familiarity with the methods of other branches of knowledge than his own may, no doubt, sometimes widen the student's outlook, and serve as a useful corrective to the prepossessions and prejudices which grow out of the exclusive devotion to a particular branch of study. But, generally speaking, the criticism which the professor of one branch of knowledge bestows upon the procedure of another is a useless impertinence.

This last remark is worth making because there are several classes of specialists who are sometimes in the habit of putting in a claim to be considered in some exceptional degree good judges of evidence in all departments of thought. Sometimes the claim is put in on behalf of lawyers. It is forgotten that the enquiries in which the lawyer is engaged deal only with the value of evidence of a particular kind. Evidence in the lawyer's sense is not merely restricted almost entirely to human testimony, but to testimony of a very particular kind, and testimony examined for a very particular purpose. Putting aside the limitations imposed by technical rules, the ultimate canons of a lawyer's estimation of evidence are his unconscious inductions about human character and motive; and human character and motive vary within certain limits in different ages and different countries. A very experienced English criminal lawyer might find himself much at sea if suddenly transplanted to an Indian tribunal; and in the same way a lawyer's judgment of historical evidence is often quite valueless on account of his ignorance of the ideas, motives, and literary habits of the past. A retired police official who has had much experience in the art of detecting the forgers of bank-notes may show himself a mere child when he attempts to deal with the literary forgeries which it is the business of the higher criticism to examine; and no class of men are responsible for more bad history than English judges and barristers. The Court of Queen's Bench, for instance, has solemnly decided that University College, Oxford, was founded by Alfred the Great; while the whole

monstrous theory about a mysterious exemption of the Church of England from the general rules of the Canon Law in the Middle Ages has been chiefly supported by the lawyer's persistent habit of reading back the maxims and ideas of modern English Courts of Justice into an age to which they were quite unknown. In the same way every one is familiar with the peculiar and exceptional incapacity to judge of probability often exhibited by Mathematicians whose training has familiarized them only with certainties; and it may be doubted whether a training even in branches of Physical Science which are less confined to pure deduction from certain premises supplies any particularly valuable preparation for the study of social phenomena. The idea of development which has so profoundly impressed modern ideas about the Universe in general was not really borrowed by the Philosophers and the Historians from the physiological laboratory. It would be truer, if anything, to say that the Biologists learned it from the students of human life and history. The idea of development, and whatever is true in the idea of a social organism, were better understood by Hegel than by Mr. Herbert Spencer; and it is curious to note that Newman's theological application or misapplication of the idea to theological dogma dates from ten years before the publication of the "Origin of Species."

If the student of one Science has no title to prescribe or to criticize the methods of another, still less has the Logician as such the right to prescribe or to criticize the methods of all the Sciences, at least when he is as far off as most Logicians are from the unattainable ideal of the perfect Philosopher who has prepared himself for the study of the Universe in general by an equally exhaustive acquaintance with every department of human knowledge in detail. Speaking generally, the Logician must apply the maxim "*cuique in sua arte credendum*" not only to the results but to the methods of each particular Science. There are, however, two ways in which the study of Logic may, I think, supply a useful corrective to the tendencies